

# **Black bear sighted in northern Delaware; public asked to contact DNREC Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police if seen**

**WILMINGTON** – DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife has received reports of a black bear sighting from residents and local police agencies in the north Wilmington area and northern New Castle County. Black bear populations within neighboring states of Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania have expanded over the past several decades. As a result, it is not unusual for a bear find its way into Delaware. Attempts will be made to live-capture the bear if located and transport it to more suitable habitat out of state within the bear's normal range.

For residents in the area where the bear has been sighted, the Division of Fish & Wildlife advises taking the following precautions:

- If you see the bear:
  - Do not approach, attempt to touch, feed, or shoot at the bear. Back away slowly – give it space. Go inside and wait for the bear to leave. Once inside, please contact Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police at 800-523-3336 to report the sighting.
  - Keep in mind, most bears fear people and will retreat when they see you.
- Eliminate potential food sources that could attract the bear by cleaning or removing anything outdoors that may smell like food. This includes:
  - Locking garbage in a secure trash container, or

keeping it inside until the day of pick-up.

- Rinsing trash containers with ammonia to eliminate food odors.
- Temporarily discontinuing the use of backyard compost piles.
- Storing cooking grills inside or keeping them clean of food residue.
- Temporarily removing birdfeeders – there are many wild food sources for birds during this time of year.
- If you have animals, particularly dogs or cats:
  - Keep their food indoors. If animals are fed outdoors, only feed the animal what it will eat in one sitting to ensure that there is no food remaining.
  - Corral livestock close to buildings and use outdoor lighting at night.
  - If you have electric fencing, make sure it's turned on to protect chicken coops, livestock nursery pens, etc.
  - Promptly dispose of dead farm animals.

The public is encouraged to report sightings of the bear by calling the Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police 24-hour dispatch line at 800-523-3336 to help track its movements and to help locate the bear to enable a proper response. For general information on bears and wildlife, please call the Division of Fish & Wildlife's Wildlife Section at 302-739-9912.

*Follow the Division of Fish & Wildlife on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/DelawareFishWildlife>.*

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